**Special Education Advisory Committee**

**Agenda for May 22, 2017 Meeting**

**8:30 a.m.**

**Members: (27)**

Monique Mawhinney, Director of Pupil Services, Chair

Jay Thornton, School Psychologist, Co-Chair

Rebecca Cunningham, Assistant Superintendent

Steve Pellathy, HS Assistant Principal

Marlynn Lux, MS Acting Principal-**ABSENT**

Amy Kern, Central Principal

Colleen Hannagan, Poff Principal

Laurie Tocci, Wyland Principal

Christy Edinger- Elementary Special Education Teacher (Wyland)-**ABSENT**

Kylee Harding-Elementary Special Education Teacher (Central)-**ABSENT**

Nichole Babka-Elementary Special Education Teacher (Poff)

Heather Tammariello- Speech Language Therapist (Central)

Lena Clary- Middle School Special Education Teacher & Department Chair

Amy Faith- High School Special Education Teacher & Department Chair

Lynn Zdinak-Elementary Regular Education Teacher (Wyland)

Julia Walls-Elementary Regular Education Teacher (Central)-**ABSENT**

Amy Rein-Elementary Regular Education Teacher (Poff)

Sheree Lucas-Middle School Regular Education Teacher

Terry Hales-High School Regular Education Teacher

Ana Hughes-High School Parent Representative-**ABSENT**

Dori Ortman-High School Parent Representative-**ABSENT**

Aaron Bernett-Middle School Parent Representative

Marie Spence-Middle School Parent Representative

Amanda Frischling-Wyland Parent Representative

Jessica Dixon-Poff Parent Representative

Tami Mangone-Central Parent Representative**-ABSENT**

Trisha Webb-Central Parent Representative

**Agenda Items:**

* **Reports from socialization and communication subcommittees**
  + **Socialization Subcommittee**
    - The following recommendations were made for each level:
      * Elementary
        + Build awareness of differences
        + Outside partnerships in education for 4th & 5th grades to build understanding of differences. One option is The Children’s Institute’s puppet shows
        + Continue with class meetings and read books about differences
        + Continue to expand The Growing Together Club
        + 5th to 6th grade peer mentor assignments
      * Middle School
        + Continue with transition programs:

Mingle in the Middle

5th grade tours

6th grade orientation

* + - * + Student Ambassador Program-incorporate diversity
        + Recommend peer buddies via the IEP team process
        + Theme of Accepting Differences through the Advisory Program
      * High School
        + Continue with The Growing Together Club for now; however this may eventually be taken over by The Best Buddies Program
        + Continue with the 8th grade breakfast
        + Continue with the 9th grade orientation
        + The IEP team should continue to make recommendations for individual student needs (ex: tour of MS or HS)
        + Recommend the Best Buddies Program

Two most recent contacts for the Pittsburgh Chapter have resigned-Dr. Pellathy is trying to connect with the new Chapter coordinator

Mike Zdinak, Emotional Support teacher at HHS, volunteered to serve as the lead teacher

Dr. Pellathy will speak with Dr. Imbarlina to inquire about who will be the contact person at the HS for The Best Buddies Program

A student will need to be identified as the club president. This requires a out of state training for a week in the summer-Dr. Pellathy is looking into this

* + - Dr. Mawhinney asked the committee if there were any objections or comments about the recommendations and there were none
  + **Communications Subcommittee**
    - The committee presented the group with an outline of documents recommended to be in the Welcome Packet. There were a total of 14 items recommended
    - It was decided that any student new to Hampton Township School District who transfers in with an IEP would receive this welcome packet during the registration process. Once the Welcome Packet is finalized, they will be shared with the building secretaries so they know to provide each family with one. For those students who currently attend Hampton Township School District and newly qualified for special education services, the welcome packet will be given to the family during the ER meeting. The contents of the packet will be reviewed by the team
    - The subcommittee will work on putting the welcome packet together so that it is ready to distribute for the 2017-2018 school year. Dr. Mawhinney will share some resources with the committee to consider adding to the packet
* **Recap of April 26 parent evening event**
  + Two parent evening events took place this school year. The first event was based on the survey results; the second event was based on the exit slips from the first event. The first event was well attended; the second event not as many people attended
* **SEAC meetings for 17-18 school year**
  + The committee agreed to hold a large group SEAC meeting once per nine weeks for the 2017-2018 school year. More could be added if needed
* **Future parent training opportunities** 
  + Dr. Mawhinney reported that as a result of the special education audit, the district needs to do more parent training related to specific areas outlined by the state: ex: transition, LRE, FBA/BSP, reading.
  + The committee discussed ways to balance these training based on parent needs vs. required state training. Both onsite and online training would be offered
  + A parent representative suggested that we let future surveys dictate the frequency of the training
  + A survey will be developed over the summer and sent via email to all families so that appropriate planning can take place for next school year
* **Sensory items in each building** 
  + Dr. Mawhinney informed the committee that she met with the special education teachers and a supervisor and OT from AOT Inc., to identify and purchase sensory items for each building. A total of 181 sensory items were purchased and delivered to the individual classrooms/buildings. Some examples include: bean bags, swings, gaming chairs, trampolines, chair bands, bubble lights with projector/music
  + Once everything is unpacked and ready to be used, pictures will be taken and a notice will be put on the website
  + Three out of the five buildings have identified a room to be utilized as a sensory room. The other two have identified a specific location for students to use the sensory items
* **Update on Hampton Parks & Recreation ESY Summer Program**
  + Dr. Mawhinney explained that this enhancement to the Hampton Parks and Recreation (HPR) ESY program was a result of parent feedback regarding their child’s ESY experience. A special education teacher will attend the HPR ESY program, along with assigned paraprofessionals. The first hour will consist of the students receiving social skills instruction (in small groups based on age range) by the special education teacher. The paraprofessionals will provide support. The second part of the program (approx. 2.5 hours) will consist of the special education teacher and paras facilitating appropriate social interactions with the students in the camp activities. Finally, the last half-hour will consist of a reflection/wrap up of each students’ day and the progress they made
  + There has been an improved relationship between the district and township over the past several years and they have been very opened to improving the ESY experiences for our students with disabilities
* **Parent Representatives: Building Reports**
  + **HS**-neither parent representative was present; however, Dr. Mawhinney informed the group that she did not receive any information from the two regarding issues at the HS
  + **MS**-no reports
  + **Poff**-no reports
  + **Wyland**
    - A parent asked about staffing levels in special education and the amount of time the special education teachers are absent; will there be an increase in special education teachers
      * It was explained that anytime a teacher is absent they complete the necessary steps to secure a substitute. A principal explained they typically assigned the building substitute to the special education classroom because they are familiar with the program and students
      * Teachers have an allotted number of sick days and personal days that they can utilize
      * Special education teachers also attend IEP meetings, district meetings and outside training. Again, substitute teachers are assigned during these absences
      * If there is a specific student issue and the special education teacher is pulled to assist the student, then sometimes the paraprofessionals will provide reteaching and the direct instruction will take place at another time throughout the child’s day
    - A parent asked if the district ever considered having an outside agency run a classroom within the school building
      * This option was not explored because it was never identified as a need. The district is very confident with their special education teachers and the work they do
    - A parent representative asked if we could send some type of notice out about all of the positive things happening in the special education department. Example: the sensory items
      * Once all of the sensory items are unpacked and set up, Dr. Mawhinney will work with Shari Berg to get pictures and perhaps write an article for the beginning of next school year
      * Dr. Mawhinney also informed the committee that each special education teacher received the Social Thinking! curriculum to begin using next school year. Michelle Garcia Winner is the author, and Michelle Lubesky, AIU consultant, will work with the Hampton special education teachers next school year to implement this curriculum and utilize the resources.
  + **Central**
    - A parent asked why there isn’t an emotional support program at the elementary and MS level
      * One area examined when determining the need for these programs is the need/number of students. At the elementary level, these programs would have to be building based: ex: ES might be housed at Wyland so that means kids from Central and Poff who needed this support would have to attend Wyland
      * Dr. Thornton explained that the student’s IEP is individualized to address the student’s needs regardless of the program. For example, he explained that if a student has emotional/social needs, there should be IEP goals to address those needs. Kids who need a more functional approach to learning should have an IEP that addresses those needs
      * Dr. Mawhinney explained that one thing Cortney Verner, the state advisor, pointed out during the special education audit was that the district’s IEPs do address the individual needs of the students and questioned why we call the special education teachers “learning support teachers” at the elementary and MS levels. She recommended we start using the term “special education teacher” because they are addressing more needs that just learning. The special education teachers have been instructed to begin using the terms “special education teacher” and “special education classroom” at the elementary & MS levels, as a result of this recommendation
    - There was discussion about teacher caseloads and how many students they can have on their rosters
      * Dr. Mawhinney attempted to explain that each district has to submit a “program profile” as part of the special education plan and special education audit. For example, if a special education teacher is identified as full time itinerant, then they can have 50 students on their caseload. If they are .5 itinerant then they can have 25 students and if they are .5 supplemental, they can have 10, so that is a total of 35 students on their caseload. She explained that Cortney Verner recommended we label our teachers as certain percentages of emotional support, life skills support and/or learning support versus creating programs if the numbers do not justify the need for the program
    - A parent asked how the results of the audit are shared
      * Dr. Mawhinney explained that once she receives the written documentation from the state, she will post the results on the special education website. She did informally report there were 3 areas the district were out of compliance: 1) the district Positive Behavioral Support Policy was not up to date-that is already completed and ready to be approved at the summer board meeting 2) parent training 3) transition-2/10 of the IEP invitations did not have the “transition” box checked
    - A parent asked what the district’s position is on co-teaching
      * An elementary principal explained that if co-teaching can be scheduled then it is; however, at the elementary level, some kids require direct instruction in the special education classroom in order to learn the basic skills needed to be successful
      * The MS and HS do co-teaching in some math and ELA classes
      * The least restrictive environment with supplementary aids and services should always be considered by the IEP team and placement decisions are made via the IEP team process
    - A parent asked why PT/OT progress reports are more narrative than the special education teachers
      * It was explained that the PT/OT do not enter progress monitoring the way the Hampton special education teachers do. HTSD teachers enter data points and then create charts and graphs with comments in order to provide more information/feedback. PT/OT do not use the charts and graphs; therefore, they provide more narrative feedback on the IEP goal page
    - A parent asked if Hampton could start a coffee shop like Seneca Valley did
      * It was explained that the goal is to hire a life skills support teacher at the high school that will be proactive in creating these types of onsite, real world opportunities for our students with disabilities
    - A parent asked how many attempts should be made to schedule an IEP meeting with the parents before holding the meeting
      * The IEP invite should be sent at least 10 days before the meeting and the special education teacher should make three attempts to schedule it via the IEP invite. The parents can use the invite to note their availability and/or alternative dates and times that work for them and return it to the special education teacher
      * There are times when situations occur in which the parent cannot attend due to an unexpected illness or emergency. The special education teacher should communicate with the parent and explain that the meeting will still take place in order to remain in compliance with annual timelines; however, the meeting should be rescheduled with the parents so they can provide their input
* **Closing Remarks/Discussion**
  + Dr. Mawhinney thanked the committee for their hard work and ongoing dedication to the special education program; especially the parents who volunteer their time to participate. She told everyone to enjoy their summer and have some fun and relaxation!
  + Dr. Cunningham reported that she was so excited to be part of this committee and believes that the SEAC made great strides in supporting our kids with disabilities this school year